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A BEAUTIFUL ROBE.

BY

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IS there no getting to heaven without humility? No. Cannot the proud be saved? No. Is lowliness essential to true piety? Yes. Is the human heart naturally proud? Yes. Why are men so slow in learning God's will? Because they are no more like little children. Why are they so averse to salvation by the righteousness of Christ? Because they are so puffed up with conceit of their own goodness. Why do so many go to hell? Because they will not humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. Why must we preach humility, seeing it is an unpopular doctrine? Because God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Nothing in Christianity is more opposed by carnal men than humbleness of mind. It was

so from the beginning. "The philosophers thought humility to be the opposite of magnanimity." The wicked still regard it in very much the same light. It is the opposite of pride. It is "the peculiar glory of Christians, and the parent nurse of other graces. It preserves in us the light of faith and the heat of love. It begets modesty in prosperity, and patience in adversity. It is the root of gratitude and obedience." The feigned humility of a hypocrite hides his pretended good qualities; but the genuine lowliness of a true Christian hides even itself. It has no secret method of display.

This virtue adorns all who possess it. Rebecca was not the less lovely, when she took a veil and covered her beauty and her jewels. The skin of Moses' face shone not the less brightly because he wist it not. Even the appearance of humility is often put on by cunning men. In all virtues the reality is better than the semblance. Gold is better than any of its counterfeits.

Christ said, "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted." "Christ seems by the frequent repetition of this maxim, to intimate that he intended it not only for those

who were to be *teachers* of others, but for *all his disciples* without exception." So his apostles undoubtedly understood him. So his prophets taught before he came. All the Scriptures speak one language.

Humility respects all our possessions and qualities, bodily and mental, natural and acquired, temporal and spiritual. It specially delights in renouncing its own wisdom and goodness, power and success. It receives with joy the warning of God: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD, which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth." Many are proud oppressors. But why should they be? "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."

In studying God's word, nothing is more necessary than humbleness of mind. "With the lowly is wisdom." "The meek will he teach his way." "God knoweth the proud afar off." "Be not wise in your own eyes." "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him."

In seeking to become wise, all the proud become fools. The mysteries of salvation are revealed unto babes, but hid from the wise and prudent. He who prays much will learn much of the mysteries of salvation. But the proud will not offer humble prayer. He thinks he already sees, and why should he cry, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law?" If you would learn of Christ, bow your neck and take his yoke upon you.

The most difficult thing in man's salvation is sufficiently to abase his pride. He naturally trusts in himself that he is righteous. He counts himself rich and increased in goods. When Hervey said, "The most difficult thing in religion is to get rid of sinful self," he went as far as unrenewed nature ever goes. But when the poor peasant said to him, "The most difficult thing in religion is to get rid of *righteous* self," he spoke like one taught of God. Strangely, wickedly, universally, unrenewed men follow those who do not submit themselves to the righteousness of God, but go about to establish their own righteousness. The last thing a convicted sinner does is to consent to be saved by the merits of Jesus Christ. Yet is there no other way of escap-

ing the wrath to come, or of laying hold on eternal life. Oh that all men thus believed. Would you grow in strength, know your weakness; would you gain wisdom, know your folly; would you gain righteousness, know your own guilt and helplessness, and the glorious fullness and sufficiency that are in Christ. "Be clothed with humility," and you will cast away the filthy rags of your own righteousness, and gladly accept the spotless, seamless robe offered you by the Lord Christ. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by him. "When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person."

All doctrinal statements, all usages, and thoughts, and notions which exalt the creature, are false and wicked. And all views of Christ which make him a mere helper, and not the sole author of salvation—an auxiliary, but not the well-spring of life, are false and wicked. And all persuasions which lead us to trust in what we have done or hope to do, and not in Christ as the sole and sufficient cause of eternal life, are false and wicked. CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Humble thyself and ac-

cept of Jesus Christ. Without Him you are nothing—can do nothing—can hope for nothing.

Of all the dispositions necessary to our salvation and growth in grace, none is more essential than lowliness of mind. No one can enter the kingdom of heaven but as a little child. Josephus's account of Christ was that he was "a teacher of such as loved the truth." And as all scriptural truth is humbling to the pride of the natural heart, it follows that the proud and self-sufficient will not so learn as to become wise unto salvation. They will not bow their necks to take upon them the yoke of Christ.

Over the entrance to Plato's school was written these words: "Let no one enter, who is not a geometrician." Our Lord requires no scientific qualification, nor any literary attainment for admission to his school. But of the learned and the ignorant, rich and poor, bond and free, old and young, savage, barbarous and civilized, he demands humbleness of mind.

Even if this arrangement on the part of God was for cause unknown to us, he has a sovereign right to prescribe the terms on which he will be approached, even as earthly potentates prescribe the attire which shall be

worn in their presence and the whole manner of coming before them. But there are many and weighty reasons why we should be humble before God.

He is in heaven, and we are upon earth. There is no greater gulf than that which separates the finite and the infinite, the Creator and the creature. Even if we were as holy as Adam before his fall, that would in no degree diminish the awful reverence we should have for the Most High, nor in the least authorize us to approach him with familiarity. As creatures, our place is in the dust.

Nor is this all. God is holy and we are sinners. He never errs. We go astray from the womb. He cannot lie. We are full of *guile*. He abhors iniquity. We draw it with a cart rope. God is kind, and gentle, and merciful. Man is harsh, and fierce, and malignant. Often do we sin ignorantly. As often do we know our Master's will and yet rebel against it. Therefore we ought to blush and be ashamed and confounded, and never open our mouths against God. Boasting is excluded. Humility, like a cloak covering us all up, eminently becomes us.

Duly humbled, it is easy for us to learn the profoundest truths and the most exalted pro-

positions submitted to our faith and apprehension. In this state what we ask for is not satisfaction to our caprice, or curiosity, or carnal reasonings, but instruction in the mind and will of God, light on the path of our duty, and hope to animate us in our tears and trials. Leighton says: "We are all too little in the humble seeking and begging divine knowledge, and that is the cause why we are so shallow and small proficient." "

When we are properly humbled and are content to be so, nothing has power to do us real harm. Filled with self-distrust, we make God our refuge. Having no confidence in the flesh, we rely upon the grace of the Spirit. Seeing nothing beautiful in ourselves, we look to him, who is the desire of all nations. Perceiving the utter vanity of earth, we renounce it as a portion, and lay up our treasure in heaven. Natural life failing, the believer lets go his hold on earth and enters heaven, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "

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